Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT IRON SCHOOL DISTRICT July 3, 2006

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Iron School District on April 19-20, 2006, included student record review, interviews with district and school administrators, related service professionals, teachers, parents, and students. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of district parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from Iron School District.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- Training of data collection team facilitated positive interactions with teachers and the team members when reviewing files.
- Both team members and the teachers being reviewed learned a great deal about the monitoring process and the content of the special education files.
- Teachers learned about the importance of file organization and details that helped in maintaining compliant records.
- A new Minimum Contents of a File form was developed to help create uniform files throughout the district.
- The district Staff Development Team was strengthened and became more aware of in-service needs.
- District special education teachers have become trained as certified mentors and have been assigned to new and provisional teachers for help and support.
- Due to the broad base of the UPIPS Steering Committee, a better understanding of compliance and regulations has been developed throughout the school district.
- Several teachers are working on enhancing their skills and effectiveness in the classroom by seeking higher degrees and more certification. Many are seeking English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsements, severe endorsements, reading endorsements, and master's degrees.
- The Iron SD Paraprofessional Handbook provides a variety of useful material to paraprofessionals, without requiring them to attend formal trainings.
- Special education files were very well organized and supported the district-wide organizational process.
- Specialized instruction was evident in general education classrooms; specialized instruction is often supported by paraprofessionals.
- Special education files are kept in locked cabinets with access authorizations posted. Files contain records
 of access.
- District-wide positive, inclusive attitude towards students with disabilities was evident at all sites.
- District administration displays positive attitude towards UPIPS process which is then echoed by special education teachers, who expressed willingness to learn.
- Iron SD utilized functioning Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT) and the 3-Tier Model to decrease referrals to special education and provide interventions to at-risk students.
- General education teachers report effective IEP meetings.
- Special education Department is including general education teachers and school administrators in special education trainings.

Parent Involvement

Parents are generally pleased with the special education services being provided for their students.

- Parents are informed of IEP meetings well in advance and take an active role as a member of the IEP team.
- They are pleased with the level of service being provided by the general classroom teacher, special education teachers, and related service personnel.
- School personnel report that parent involvement is very important on every level of participation.
- Parents took an active role on the UPIPS Steering Committee by helping with surveys, coordinating with school personnel in subcommittee meetings, compiling data, and voicing concerns.
- Parents are provided with procedural Safeguards at every IEP meeting.
- Iron School District invited each parent of a student with a disability to the parent focus group.
- Parents reported receiving copies of IEPs and Evaluation Summary Reports. File reviews corroborated documentation of copies of IEPs to parents.
- The parent focus group was a sincere sharing of positive experiences and concerns. Fifteen parents attended and participated.
- Parents report being notified of meetings by phone and/or mail.
- Parents feel that the schools value their involvement.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- The large majority of students are attending school in their neighborhood schools and participating in school related activities.
- IEPs are developed with the team focusing on students with disabilities having access to the general curriculum and the goals developed relating to the state core curriculum.
- Appropriate placement and daily schedules for students are directed toward individual achievement and progress toward annual goals on the IEP.
- Students are assisted with CRT and U-PASS testing through the matrix developed by the USOE that allows for accommodations relating to the required testing.
- Special education staff demonstrated a willingness to learn and apply that knowledge when developing student IEPs.
- Evidence of recent LRBI training in Iron SD during teacher interviews.
- Related services and specific program modifications were listed on IEPs.
- Replacement forms were included in files, when appropriate.
- Manifestation Determinations were included in files, when appropriate.
- IEPs included measurable goals that addressed all areas of student needs as identified in the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statement.
- Students with disabilities observed in general education classrooms received differentiated instruction, as
 well as accommodations such as paraeducator support, picture charts, manipulatives, adjusted workload,
 and additional support from teacher.

Transitions

- Age 3-5 programs are being provided through the district's preschool programs.
- The preschool actively coordinates with Early Intervention and Head Start to serve student needs appropriately.
- The preschool holds transition meetings with school administrators and kindergarten teachers to discuss placement and accommodation needs.
- The district transition facilitator attends IEP meetings for students ages 16 and above (earlier when appropriate) when requested for transition goal development.
- The district transition facilitator also helps school teams determine curriculum, vocational options, and assists with coordination with agencies for transition services.
- High school special education teachers provide job sampling opportunities for students attending high school by offering a course in life skills that assists students with job seeking skill and provides an opportunity to sample many community jobs to determine their preference and aptitude.
- Community agencies, along with Iron SD, conduct an annual transition fair for students and parents, designed to help them become aware of services available and possible funding sources for additional training and employment.
- Part C to Part B transition planning meetings included LEA representative participation.
- IEPs completed by 3rd birthday.
- Part C invited to initial IEP meeting, when appropriate.
- Students invited to and participating in IEP meetings.
- Interagency linkages included in transition plans.

- Student input is considered and documented when developing the transition plan.
- Transition plans included in special education files, when appropriate.

Disproportionality

- All special education files include student ethnic and home language information.
- Iron SD has recently revised their Safe School Procedures to ensure that IDEA disciplinary procedures are followed.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ One Special Education Teacher over caseload limits.
- ✓ Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions failed, with supporting data. Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions implemented before referral.
- ✓ Copies to parents of Review of Existing Evaluation Data form, Evaluation Summary Report, and Eligibility Determination not documented due to missing form or no documentation that copy was given.
- ▼ Notice of Meeting for Eligibility meetings missing or incomplete.
- ✔ Prior Written Notice of Eligibility and Change of Placement missing.
- ✓ Evaluation Procedures not followed: Review of Existing Data form missing; students were not assessed in all areas related to suspected disability and sufficiently comprehensive to identify needs;
- ✓ Evaluation Procedures for SLD classification did not include the preparation of an evaluation summary report that includes the relevant behavior noted during the observation or the description of the instructional environment in which the observation took place.
- ✓ IEP: PLAAFP statements did not include how the disability affects involvement/progress in the general curriculum or include baseline data; did not document special factors, specifically positive behavior interventions; did not document goals, services, and amount of time needed if ESY was selected.
- ▼ Timelines for IEP review/revision, initial evaluation, and reevaluation exceeded or unable to be determined.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.